

James Horne Morrison: A New College Student in the Canadian Wilderness, 1894-1895

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“No apology is offered for the predominance of incident and of what may be called the fun of the road”. Thus wrote James Horne Morrison in the preface to one of his several books on foreign missions, words that were penned following a long journey to Africa a quarter-century after he, as a young theological student at New College, had volunteered to spend a year in Canada’s north west; but the words could just as well have stood at the beginning of his Canadian diary.¹

Those mortals who have attempted to keep a diary recognise the pitfalls at once: how to avoid sweeping generalisations that lose the flavour and texture of time and place, without, on the other hand, becoming so tied to time and place that the writing produced is merely a catalogue of aches and pains and meals eaten. From April 1894 to April 1895, Morrison recorded his experiences in the Canadian wilderness. Aches, pains, and meals eaten are in his diary, together with long hours of travel on a lively, but aged, horse, whose willing spirit could not quite compensate for his lubberly stride and bumpy bones; yet Morrison recorded them in such a manner so as to illuminate the more general theme of rural hardship and the widespread lack of decent food, owing to drought and crop failure. And, given Morrison’s clear and precise use of the English language, the reader is never faced with the task of hacking through forests of verbiage before reaching the solid timber of meaning. Perhaps there is a science to successful diary-writing, but it requires, even more, art; and that requires an artist.

At first glance, one might not expect the son of a gardener, even a head gardener to the dowager Duchess of Gordon, to display such abilities, let alone to have the opportunity to have them refined at university. Yet few will need to be reminded of the significant Scottish approach to higher education, which traditionally made provision for bright young men to attend university no matter how humble their backgrounds. Thus, there was a long line of nineteenth-century Scottish lads who shared similar beginnings and who became “artists” in varying ways. Carlyle and Edward Irving will probably come to mind at

¹ The diary, written in one hard-covered ruled University of Edinburgh notebook, was made available to the present writer by the diarist’s elder daughter, Miss I.M. Morrison of Edinburgh. For this, and for further information relating to her father, I am greatly indebted. I also am indebted to the Librarian of New College, J.V. Howard, and to I.C. Cunningham of the Department of Manuscripts at the National Library of Scotland, for their invaluable assistance.

once. Yet perhaps the most useful parallel would be Thomas Davidson, whose father was a shepherd near Jedburgh. Davidson's letters, collected and published by James Brown in *The Life of a Scottish Probationer*, have a strikingly similar tone of canny insight and humour to Morrison's Canadian diary. Both are written by young men about their pre-ordination experiences.

Davidson, of course, never was ordained, dying at a tragically young age, two years before James Horne Morrison was born in Aberdeenshire on 2 September 1872. When his father became head gardener at Huntly Lodge, Huntly, the young James attended the local Gordon schools, infant and parish, and was dux of his upper school. At sixteen, he went up to the University of Aberdeen, about forty miles south-east of Huntly, where he received his M.A. in 1892 with Honours in Classics and Philosophy.

Aged twenty, Morrison came to Edinburgh to begin his New College course for the ministry of the Free Church. As a member of the New College Missionary Society, he soon learned of the appeals for assistance from Canada. The Scottish influence in Canada has always been extensive, especially in education and religion, but it was just at this time that the call was strongest for ministers, and those training for the ministry, to go out from Scotland to the expanding mission field in Canada. After Canadian confederation in 1867, the development of the church, especially in the west, progressed rapidly: between 1875 and 1925 the number of full-time presbyterian ministers in Canada increased from 600 to 1700, while communicant membership rose from 88,000 to 380,000.

The cutting edge of Canadian presbyterianism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was in what was practically a new nation: the Canadian north west, especially following the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. To facilitate the provision of religious leadership in the western provinces the ancient post of Scottish superintendent, in effect, was revived in Canada. As soon as James M. Robertson of Winnipeg, himself a native of Perthshire, assumed his powerful position as director of the North West Home Mission programme in 1881, he turned to Scotland for the needed manpower. Morrison's introduction to this appeal was through another Canadian, the remarkable Charles William Gordon. Gordon had been ordained by the Canadian Presbyterian Church in 1890, following theological studies at New College; and from 1890 to 1893 he had served as a missionary, under Robertson's supervision, in the mining and timber camps of the Canadian Rockies. This experience provided much material for his later immensely popular novels written under the *nom de plume* of Ralph Conner, his first novel, *Black Rock*, being published in 1898. In 1893, Gordon had returned to Edinburgh for a further year's study, and it was during this time that he publicised the cause of the mission programme in north-west Canada.

Robertson had christened this programme the "Forward

Movement", and Gordon had special stationery printed which identified himself as the movement's representative in Scotland, operating from Edinburgh's Maitland Temperance Hotel. He was supported by a committee of local worthies: Henry Drummond, Hugh Barbour, and George Brown. The Canadian visitor was assiduous in his efforts and was warmly received by the colonial committee of the Free Church of Scotland. They reported that Gordon, "in whose favour the Canadian Church gave a Commission to the Presbyterian Churches of the mother country", had had as the object of his visit "to spread information, to evoke interest, and to stimulate liberality.... He has been actively engaged during the winter in fulfilling his commission, and has met with a large measure of success". Mr Gordon:²

who has pleaded the cause so well in this country, both by voice and pen, is soon to return to Canada. He is anxious that the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland should take some organised action with the view of securing that emigrants from this country to Canada . . . shall be looked after and handed over on landing to representatives of the Canadian Church, who might help them in many ways, but especially to maintain a character worthy of the country that bred them, of the Church that baptized them....

On 18 December 1893, Gordon addressed the New College Missionary Society on "Mission Work in the Prairies and Among the Rockies". There can be little doubt that Morrison, then in his second year at New College, was present at that meeting, for it was in this address that Gordon made his most direct appeal for volunteers to work in the Canadian north west. The New College Missionary Society provided not only a sounding-board for Gordon's appeals, but also undertook to give financial backing to any of its members who agreed to serve.³ The two members of the Society who came forward were Morrison and his fellow student, Reynolds Reid. Morrison and Reid called on the Secretary of the Free Church colonial committee, Dr Milne Rae, on 4 April 1894 to receive funds for their expenses, and sailed from Glasgow two days later.⁴ Travelling with them were three other students, two of them from the United Presbyterian College. Morrison indicates that two of his fellows went to Manitoba, one to British Columbia, and one to Saskatachewan, Morrison's own destination.

² Report of the Colonial Committee, pp. 5, 7, in *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland . . . May 1894* (Edinburgh, 1894). Gordon described his efforts for securing Scottish support in his autobiography. See Charles W. Gordon, *Postscript to Adventure* (London, 1938), 132-136.

³ See National Library of Scotland [NLS], MS. Acc. 4633/2, James Henderson (president of the New College Missionary Society) to Milne Rae (secretary of the Free Church Colonial Committee), 2 March, 26 March, and 30 March 1894.

⁴ NLS, MS, Acc. 4633/2, Reynolds Reid to Milne Rae, 29 March 1894. The willingness of the Colonial Committee to provide travel funds for the two emboldened Gordon to request similar assistance for two students from the Free Church College in Aberdeen who also had agreed to go. See *ibid.*, Charles W. Gordon to Milne Rae, 17 March and 21 March 1894.

After a twelve-day crossing the students docked at New York and made their way by train to Toronto. Morrison wearily recorded the fact that "The United Presbyterians refuse to take sleeping berths on board the train, so not to appear snobbish". He reluctantly followed suit, which meant "little or no sleep and no toilet in the morning". He made no attempt to disguise his relief in escaping the United States: "I must say I didn't like New York at all". And then: "As soon as I crossed the Suspension Bridge into Canada I breathed again — don't like the States at all".

In Toronto, Morrison stayed briefly with Superintendent Robertson:

Dr Robertson's stories of the North West Mission field tell like romances. He has the whole country at his finger ends. Oh, if I could only write down the half of what he said . . . However I hope I'll remember the story of McKillip and the five ruffians whom he smashed thus laying the foundation of a strong self-supporting congregation, also the fellow who tried to chuck him out of his house, also that other story of the student, Grant, who made the murderous ruffian deliver up his pistol and knife and beg pardon on his knees.

But the stay in Toronto offered other pleasures. He considered that he had been "royally received. At one house an afternoon 'at Home' was given at which were present several prominent ministers and professors and above all ladies — most delightful — haven't felt so much at home since I left it". And well he might. Every prominent person he met seemed Scottish: Robertson, Cavin, Gordon, Wilson, McTavish. And, of course, the "ladies". Once or twice during the diary, a fleeting reference can be detected to some young lady or other. This would indicate that the heart of the man beat alongside the heart of the trainee-parson. In fact, the only positive thing he has to say about the Indians is that several of the maidens are "very good looking".

Morrison was sent by Superintendent Robertson to Saskatchewan, to a large, rather ill-defined area, several miles north of Moose Jaw. There was a church, plus three further preaching points, scattered throughout a long strip perhaps twenty-five miles long and ten miles wide. But as he travelled further west to reach this charge he had little idea of the rigours that awaited him, and he revelled in the majesty of the natural surroundings. Throughout the diary, his observations of the beauties and terrors of the phenomena of nature are splendidly executed and may remind one of the diary of Francis Kilvert. Lake Superior:

stretched south, a most lovely blue right to the horizon. All the land was covered with pinewoods down to the water's edge. Running along the lake we soon came opposite islands and here the lake was frozen right over. Some of the islands were near the shore and some rose with great snow-capped mountains away on the horizon. (There goes a church bell, the first I've heard since I left home.) One would never fancy them islands but we run for miles and miles and see the lake

gradually encircle them. Sometimes we are near the lake and sometimes high above it so that one could step off the car on to a valley hundreds of feet below. Soon the scenery grows wilder. Between the shore and the islands there is a great fault in the rocks, the lake bed having sunk down and left cliffs on either side of enormous height rising right out of the water. On the shore we rush along the foot of them, plunging now and then through lofty tunnels cut from the living rock. Cascades pour down the melting snow over the cliffs and sometimes the fall hangs in one mass of ice. We stand in the platform at the end of the cars and look up to the giddy heights — almost getting splashed with the water pouring over — or turning round we see the same cliffs rising on the islands like huge terraces, one piled on top of the other in one huge cliff. . . . At times the rocks retreat from the lake and we see them rising above the forest, glinting through the trees. Then a white flash and we see a great cataract frozen all down the face of the cliff and glancing white in the sun. Imagine miles and miles of this — a great picturesque wilderness, without a beast, bird or human habitation but all silence or dreary desolation except for the rush of the train or the roar of the foaming torrents as we dash over them.

But nature had more to offer than beauty. Morrison arrived at his charge during the spring, but summer was not far behind. The heat brought horrific infestations of mosquitoes. “My hands and face are all red lumps and all over my head the bumps would puzzle any phrenologist”. In church, “I . . . try to keep some degree of dignity and decorum but it is an awful business to think and speak and kill mosquitoes all the time”. Yet “kill one mosquito and ten come to its funeral and the funeral is held in the old Highland style with lots to eat and drink or as much as the grief-stricken relatives can lay hands on”. If he slapped his pony’s side it literally would drip with blood. By November, however, Morrison could have used some of that heat. In an area where there could be 80 degrees of frost, winter was a test of endurance. Morrison’s moustache froze solid one night. His horse became cased in ice as the sweat froze on him wherever he was uncovered. By the end of November, the ink with which he was attempting to write a letter had to be thawed out on top of the stove, and just into the New year he had to begin scrapping frost off the bedroom walls.

These appalling conditions of climate only exacerbated a critical social situation which caused Morrison a great deal of concern, for he had arrived in North America just at the height of extremely serious agrarian unrest, both in western Canada and in the middle west of the United States. In the latter, the post-civil war Granger movement had served as a model for later and more powerful organisations, especially the Populist movement which was at the zenith of its influence during the 1890s. Ever since the 1860s, agriculture had been slipping backwards, whilst the American cities and factories had been surging

ahead in the so-called "Gilded Age" of industrial development. Farmers were chronically in debt, with the threat of foreclosure always haunting and always real. Most often, railways were seen by the western farmers as their arch-enemy, and a demand for the government ownership of the railways was one of the most persistent calls by the Populist movement in the United States.

In 1893 the situation had been greatly worsened by the financial panic and consequent depression in the United States: and 1894 was the most brutal year of that depression. Two days after Morrison reached his mission field, "Coxey's Army" reached Washington, on 30 April. This was only one of a large number of groups of frustrated men from throughout the United States who marched to that nation's capital to petition the federal government for assistance, especially calling for plans of federal work relief. The American Congress refused to pass any such legislation.

Many of these frustrations were reflected in Canada, especially in the rural areas. Morrison has some scathing things to say about the Canadian railways in their relation to the prairie farmers, and some of the desperation of the local people, together with their resentment of the railways, is seen in his vivid description of men going out one day and carrying away twenty miles of railway sleepers to use as fuel. Though the Canadian government was prepared to act to alleviate some of the worst hardship, "these things are so slow in coming", Morrison reflected. "The people here are just about despairing", he wrote. "Some families have nothing to eat. . . . All the hay is burned right up to the Saskatchewan — right into the water's edge". "Some of the families here are quite in destitution and the bank has declared that they will close all mortgages. . . . If that happens then probably five families that I know of — besides many more that I don't know of — will be sold out. . . . A young fellow . . . has started off with a horse and cart to seek his fortune elsewhere leaving his wife at her father's where there is 13 of a family (besides parents) and nothing to eat". "On Thursday afternoon I called on Mrs Jim Barrie who is very poorly. She has one little girl. The family are already mortgaged to the eyes and at their wits end so what they are to do now is a mystery". The doctor had advised Mrs Barrie to leave the climate, since it did not agree with her, and had suggested the south of France!

Yet these pictures of people held in thrall by forces beyond their control are more than offset by descriptions of those whose predicaments were of their own making. Morrison, in particular, observed the failings of his fellow-countrymen and tells of a young Scot preaching in one of Canada's large urban churches:

At sermon time he held up his sermon and said, "You see I've brought a sermon with me but I'm not going to use it. Since I came into the pulpit I've got power and I'm going to preach as they do in the old country". What he preached, nobody knows and probably he didn't know himself but the people prayed to be saved from any

more old country preaching. He read as one passage the narrative of the prodigal son and made comments on it as he went along. "Certain man had two sons — Blessed thing there were two sons else this parable could never been written — The younger son said to his father" — Here one of the audience said loudly, "Mighty good job there weren't twins, else there wouldn't have been a younger." The same student went to a poorhouse or some place of that kind and to illustrate the condescension of Christ, he spoke as follows, "Here are you a lot of poor, infirm, sick and diseased uneducated old people and here am I. I am far better than you and yet I can come down to your level. I can come here on a Sunday afternoon and talk to you like one of yourselves."

The level of churchmanship of some of his parishioners did not escape the diarist's attention. "Mr McBryde fluctuates in his views on infant and adult baptism and so some of his family are baptised and some are not. He seems to be wishing to experiment and see which plan will turn out best". Another man declared himself an episcopalian. "'What parish do you belong to?' 'Don't know anything about a parish.' 'Who confirmed you?' 'Nobody.' 'But I thought you said you were an Episcopalian.' 'Well so I am. Here's how it is. When I was down in New Orleans I goes into an Episcopalian Church and among other things I hears them saying as how they done them things they oughter not a' done and left undone them things they oughter 'ave done. So I says that's how it is with me and so since then I've considered myself an Episcopalian'."

It is not difficult to guess Morrison's own theological orientation. Marcus Dods had been appointed professor of New Testament at New College three years before Morrison began his course of study for the ministry, and Morrison was reading the first volume of Dods's commentary on John while in Canada. Robert Rainy was New College's principal. While in Winnipeg Morrison attended some lectures at the Manitoba Presbyterian College, whose principal, John Mark King, was a native of Roxburghshire. The college taught arts subjects from October to April and theology from April to September. This was unique amongst Canadian colleges and was for a very good practical reason: it enabled the theological students to go on the mission field in the north west during the winter, when all the other colleges were in session.⁵ This arrangement hardly was popular with the tutors at the college, but it does show the desperate need for manpower in the very area of Canada to which Morrison and his colleagues had been recruited. Morrison, however, records that the "students are lamentably behind as you can judge for yourself, my dear diary, when I give you some notes I scribbled on an old letter while sitting in the class. All three years were together but the third year men were being

⁵ Report of the Colonial Committee, pp. 6-7, in *Proceedings and Debates . . . May 1895* (Edinburgh, 1895).

questioned. . . . All the points are dictated slowly and repeated over and over so that progress is very slow. I can fancy a lot of cramming before an exam. The students often interrupt if they miss a point, especially a reference. 'Is it 8 or 18, sir?' Again 'Hebrews 9 and 14', 'Hebrews'? 'Yes'. The derivation of every word is asked. . . . Critical spirit seems quite wanting in the class. The tone is all through more like a prayer meeting. Cavin,⁶ — 'What does the Shorter Catechism say on that?' Chorus of voices with bated breath, 'A *true* body and a *reasonable* soul'. What a heretic I feel! I ought to be burned alive in the corridor and the whole building disinfected. So much for my notes — not so voluminous as those of my fellow listeners". Manitoba College received financial aid from the Free Church of Scotland "from year to year",⁷ yet that did not stop one student Morrison encountered from stating that "Rainy is like the dragon's tail in the Book of Revelation — 'because he leads so many young men astray'. I wickedly asked if it was because he put Robertson Smith out of the church — a star in the theological firmament. I believe when Principal Rainy was here Principal MacVicar⁸ of Montreal tried to pump him upon the subject of Dr Dods but all he could get from Dr Rainy was, 'Ah, he's a remarkable man!' " In Saskatchewan, Morrison was horrified when he attended a "Bible Class by Mr Fingland, superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School. His subject was the trial of Christ and his wealth of language was gruesome. He seemed to have searched all literature for instances of cruelty to compare with it and gave the opinions of the 'best anatomists' on the pains of 'frizzled flesh' till one began to creep".

Other than Dods's commentary, Morrison's reading during his Canadian year was quite limited. He reveals a great interest in Hegel and became absorbed in reading a book on the history of Elizabethan England, as well as Macaulay's history of England and Carlyle's *Hero-worship*. He complains at the general lack of books and says that *Pilgrim's Progress* is the closest thing to a novel available. A highlight to him was the arrival of the *British Weekly*, "always an inspiration".

Morrison clearly was a Liberal in politics, and this more than once got him into difficulties with the more ardent of Empire-worshippers he confronted, especially on the question of Irish home rule. He reveals that he was in the habit of preaching on social evils, but records no details of his sermons or texts. Though he was pleased when the "Patrons of Industry" — the Canadian counterparts to the Populist movement in the United States — returned sixteen members to the Ontario legislature, he was very critical of some of the political pressures brought to bear upon its members by the Patron organisation, and in the end he doubted if it could really be an effective means of solving the

⁶ William Cavin, a native of Wigtonshire, was principal of Knox College, Toronto, and was serving as a visiting professor at Manitoba when Morrison attended this lecture.

⁷ Report of the Colonial Committee, p. 7, in *Proceedings and Debates* . . . May 1894.

⁸ Donald Harvey MacVicar, a native of Argyllshire, was principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

farmers' difficulties. In fact, he was disenchanted with Canadian politics: "There is one thing . . . that I don't like about Canadian politics and Canadian public speakers and that is the too patent selfishness. These M.P.'s all advised the voters to look out for No. 1 — always to vote for their own advantage. There seems to be no idea of looking out for the general good — no thought of disinterested patriotism. Such a thing seemed to be undreamed of and I don't think it bodes well for Canadian politics. It seems to me that that too is the failing in the States".

Throughout the diary, Morrison paints splendid cameos of such gatherings as Orangemen, the Patrons of Industry, as well, of course, as of church gatherings. There also are fleeting references to the natives, and he appears curiously unwilling to show them any sympathy. "I have not had the chance of speaking to any of the Indians yet but I have seen several. They are nearly as low as our gipsies at home. The women do what work is done and also hire out for day's washing in the houses in Moose Jaw etc. They seem to be incurable so long as they are together". With this exception, his pen never is ill-liberal (except, occasionally, with those who are ill-liberal), and his wry sense of humour, not only regarding others but also himself, is a constantly compelling quality. Like all keen observers, however, he concentrates on observing others; the diary is not an historical pilgrimage round himself. And even if it had no literary merit, this journal would still be of historical importance, since first-hand accounts of life amongst the Scottish settlers in western Canada at this time are quite rare.

It was Morrison's own equipoise which allowed him to describe the conditions under which he laboured rather than to succumb to them. This fine inner-balance of his character concealed the untold strain put upon the group of young men who were cutting their ecclesiastical teeth in western Canada; for the natural conditions of drought and heat, icy loneliness and bitter cold, could not help but take their toll on these young Scots. If local families faced the almost unbearable task of travelling through snow storms or blistering heat or impassable roads of mud on those occasions when they had to be away from their farms, how much greater were the pressures — and risks — for the students who, of necessity, had to travel great distances to conduct services and to visit their flocks. How serious a problem this was is revealed in the melancholy fact that one of the students who accompanied Morrison could not bear the strain of the winter and suffered a complete nervous breakdown, having to be committed to an asylum. Morrison, himself, took charge of bringing the young man back to his family in Scotland. As Morrison and his companions were making their way home in April 1895, the Canadian Presbyterian Church was writing to the Free Church General Assembly, to thank them for "the students who have come to assist us in destitute fields, and rendered noble service. That their example may be followed by others, and that permanent

settlement of Scotch and Irish students in the virgin soil of the great North-West may follow is our hope".⁹

The diary is not really a diary, for Morrison did not find it possible to make daily entries; usually he would look back over the previous several days. Therefore, there was time for some reflection and organisation of thoughts and events. The diary began with good intentions, but the busier he became the less frequent the entries; as he himself comments: "Diary seems to suffer in these busy times". Thus, this diary, like so many others, is best at the outset. Perhaps especially lacking in the later pages are the lingering and poignant descriptions of nature. But, unlike most diaries, this one has an ending as well as a beginning, and in his usual self-effacing and canny way he set the task to rest:

We got to Halifax about midnight on Friday and went aboard the boat. Thence we sailed out on Saturday at 4 p.m. — the sail for the first hour or two reminding one of the Clyde. And so Canada's shores melted in the distance carrying with them a wonderful year of my life — but don't moralise. Smooth passage, no seasickness, very dull, reached Liverpool last Monday morning after sailing along the north coast of Ireland all Sunday. Thence by train on Monday to Edinburgh — marvelling greatly at the greenness of the grass and the sleekness of the horses. Thence on Thursday to Aberdeen and Huntly — persuaded that of all dullest businesses the most tiresome is diary writing — Adieu.

Morrison never again attempted to keep a diary as such, but his writing had by no means ceased. After finishing his course at New College, he served as an assistant, first at the South Free Church, Aberdeen, from 1897 to 1899, and then at St Leonard's United Free Church, Perth, from 1899 to 1901. In July 1901, now aged twenty-eight, he was ordained and was inducted as minister of the United Free Church of Falkland, Fife; two months later he married.

Undoubtedly, his Canadian experience instilled in him a life-long interest in and concern for the overseas mission of the Church, for during the years of his long ministry in Scotland he developed quite an extensive involvement in that area of the Church's outreach. From March to September 1914, he travelled in Central Africa as one of the delegates to missions of the United Free Church General Assembly. The publication of his first book the preceding year was the spur to this African voyage. In this volume, *On the Trail of the Pioneers: a Sketch of the Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland*,¹⁰ Morrison traced the mission work in Hungary, Constantinople, Palestine, Aden, India, China, the New Hebrides, the West Indies, and Africa.

If that book had fired his desire to visit some of the mission stations he wrote about, the actual six months spent in Africa in 1914 provided the material for his second book, *Streams in the Desert: a Picture of*

⁹ Report of the Colonial Committee, p. 5, in *Proceedings and Debates . . . May, 1895*.

¹⁰ London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913.

Life in Livingstonia.¹¹ This work dealt with his travels in north-eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and something of the descriptive powers of the Canadian diary shine through, especially in his portrayal of his dramatic return in September, in a ship crammed with people and confusion, as the drums of European war began their relentless beat. After a six-week voyage, the ship sailed into Plymouth Sound:¹²

Never had our native land appeared so dear. "Old England": I seemed to discover in a moment all the music of that noble name. A patriotic Scot, I claimed it as mine and exulted in it. How foolish seemed the domestic jealousy of Scots and English! Let Ephraim no more envy Judah, and Judah cease to vex Ephraim. Is it not all one glorious island home?

In 1917 Morrison was inducted as minister of Newhills United Free Church, Bucksburn, Aberdeen (called Bucksburn after the Union of 1929), where he remained until his retirement in 1942, five years before his death. The one break in this long period of service at Bucksburn took place only months after he settled there: during much of 1918 and 1919 he served with the Y.M.C.A. in the war zone of France, during which time he lectured to British troops.

During the 1920s, Morrison published three further books on overseas missions: *Missionary Heroes of Africa*¹³ in 1922; *William Carey: Cobbler and Pioneer*¹⁴ in 1924; and *The Scottish Churches' Work Abroad*¹⁵ in 1927. This last volume appeared in the Scottish Layman's Library, edited by John Adams. In addition, Morrison contributed fifty-seven sermons and two general introductions to the *Speaker's Bible*.

Yet the 1930s brought an interesting shift in his intellectual interests and literary output. When Morrison received his M.A. from Aberdeen in 1892 he also carried off prizes in mathematics and natural philosophy. The early 1930s saw the publication in the *Expository Times* of a number of his articles on the relationship of Christianity and scientific study. All this found fruition in his invitation to give the Cunningham Lectures at New College in 1936. Morrison, now aged sixty-three, delivered in this penetrating series of lectures an analysis of the relationship of, and the boundaries between, science and Christian faith. Later that year the lectures were published as *Christian Faith and the Science of To-Day*,¹⁶ a book that still richly repays reading. The following year, 1937, he also published a booklet for the Church of Scotland, entitled *God and the Atom*.

But 1937 was to bring his greatest academic honour, when he was

¹¹ London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919. Morrison also published, in 1917, a booklet, *Forty Years in Darkest Africa; the Life of Dr Laws of Livingstonia*.

¹² *Streams in the Desert*, 174.

¹³ New York: George H. Doran.

¹⁴ London: Hodder and Stoughton.

¹⁵ Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

¹⁶ London: Hodder and Stoughton.

awarded in March the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Aberdeen. At that same ceremony, Vincent Massey, then High Commissioner for Canada in London, was awarded an honorary degree. It is not difficult to imagine Morrison, tongue firmly in cheek, telling Massey: "You know, I'm quite an authority on Canada, myself — lived there for several months; why, it must have been over forty years ago, now. In fact, somewhere I even have a diary I kept". Morrison may have been "persuaded that of all dullest businesses the most tiresome is diary writing", but few, indeed, would be able to say the same regarding the contents of his diary.